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RESTORATION REVIEW

RESURRECTION MORNING: WHAT HAPPENED?

ROBERT MEYERS

In a recent issue of the *Firm Foundation*, a Texas weekly which shapes the thinking of thousands of Church of Christ people, the following series of startling affirmations saw the light of print:

"God's book is true. It is infallible. It is verbally inspired. There are no errors or mistakes within it. If the reader knows of one, let him produce it . . . When there is a conflict let's change man's findings and not God's revelation."

One suspects a degree of hysteria behind utterances so self-contradictory as these. The writer asserts that there are no errors, then admits almost immediately that a conflict may be found but must not be acknowledged. This is built-in proof against anyone who, like myself, supposes these statements to go too far. If I present evidence of serious textual difficulties in the Bible they will simply be described as something else, because serious textural difficulties cannot exist.

In other words, if my reason insists that conflicts appear in parallel versions of Biblical incidents, I must step heavily on my reason and shout, "It cannot be so!" If my reason lifts its bloodied head to ask feebly, "Why not?" I promptly smash it again and say, "Because there can't, that's all!" The Bible cannot contain conflicts because it cannot contain conflicts. If one seems to appear, I must call it something else.

If the astonishing dogmas quoted from the *Firm Foundation* were rare in Church of Christ publications and pulpits, they might wisely be ignored. But such blithe pronouncements about the nature of the Bible are commonplace in all but a handful of our journals and they have profound effects upon our masses. Coupled with remarks like one I heard a college Bible department head make to some fifteen hundred students ("There is not an error *of any kind* in the pages of this sacred book!"), they confirm many Church of Christ people in their tendency to worship a book rather than a Person, and to care more about what a man's view of that book is than about whether his life reflects the philosophy of Jesus.

It has long seemed to me that we shall simply have to expose our people

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to some of the textual problems of the Bible so that they will forsake their simplistic approach to it and their complacent conviction that they have adequately mastered those parts of it which need concern anyone. Surely we may do this with our college-age students who are, by this time, beginning to encounter textual analysis in college. It is salutary that they be introduced to some Biblical textual criticism in friendly surroundings lest they decide, when they hear it later from someone hostile, that they have been deceived and something has been kept hidden from them out of fear.

It is extraordinary that so few older, serious Bible students in our religious denomination have ever bothered to put parallel passages under microscopic study so that they might lay a basis for personal conviction as to precisely what the Bible is. For surely unless one knows something significant about what the Bible is, he will continue to have serious difficulties knowing what it *means*. The way to know what a literary composition *is* is by the most intensive, unremitting analysis of it. However dry and tedious the task may seem at first, its significance ultimately grips one and it takes on (like pure mathematics) a strange beauty of its own.

I would suggest that teachers spend at least one or two class periods occasionally in which they indicate to adult students what the textual problems may be in such gospel accounts as that of the Limited Commission, or the prediction of Peter's denial and the fulfillment of that prediction as these two matters are handled by different writers. It occurs to me often that anything which chastens the pulpit-nourished pride of so many of us cannot be a complete waste of time. It is good for some of us to learn that wise and good men have labored long over textual problems and died unsure of how they should resolve them. To put it bluntly, but without malice, there is so very much that we do not know.

I am going to present here one of the most fascinating of all those problems: the account of the resurrection morning as handled by all four gospel writers. I anticipate a variety of responses, ranging from fascinated agreement to aggrieved anger, but my purpose is not merely to shock. I labor under a genuine conviction that it is now time to tell our people what every Bible instructor in every one of our colleges has known already for years.

I have divided the account of the resurrection morning into nine topics so that we may deal minutely with restricted areas. Mark, commonly considered the most primitive of the four, is printed first so that readers may remember to consider this belief. If you wish to be engaged strenuously with what follows, please refer carefully and constantly to the parallel accounts as printed here for your convenience.

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1. *Testimony as to TIME.* Mark says that the women came when the sabbath was past, early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen. Matthew says "toward the dawn", a phrase which suggests that the sun had *not* yet risen. Luke's testimony on this point is generalized, but John says specifically that it was "still dark." (There is a hint later in his version that Mary may not have recognized Jesus because it was dark, but that she did recognize him when she heard his voice).

We must recognize at the very outset of this analysis that John's account is so different from the others that we shall have difficulty knowing what things are parallel between him and the three Synoptists. Some defenders of textual inerrancy, stumbling quickly on the obvious contradiction between "when the sun had risen" and "while it was still dark," have argued that Mary came to the tomb first by herself (as in John), then came later for a second visit with the groups named by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. A careful and honest student will discover, I think, that this explanation will not hold water. For one thing, John appears to slip up when he quotes Mary and has her say "*we* do not know where they have laid him," despite the fact that he has said nothing previously of her being in the company of others. This is probably an unintentional but significant proof that John is actually describing the same visit described by the Synoptists.

There are other difficulties in the way of accepting two visits by Mary. I shall mention them as we proceed. The important thing to remember at present is that we have already run headlong into a serious textual crux having to do with what time of day it was when the women came.

2. *Testimony as to CHARACTERS involved.* Mark lists three: Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome. Matthew lists Mary Magdalene and the other Mary (probably the mother of James). Luke speaks first of "they" but later identifies them as Mary Magdalene, Joanna (is she the same as Salome? or someone else?), Mary the mother of James, and "other women." One gets no hint from Mark and Matthew that there were "other women." But this kind of variant is of slight importance. It merely suggests the kind of differences in presentation which one would expect of men recalling an incident.

3. *Testimony as to PURPOSE.* Mark says that they went to "anoint him." Matthew says only that they went "to see the tomb." Luke says that they were "taking . . . spices," an obvious hint that they planned to anoint him. John's gospel says absolutely nothing about the purpose of Mary's visit; there is no mention of spices or anointing. Again, although the slight variants exist and speak something, quietly at least, about the theory of verbal inspiration, they are not memorably troublesome. One wonders only why Matthew should omit the purpose stated by his fellow Synoptists and suggest instead a different reason.

4. *Testimony as to THE STONE.* In Mark the women are asking one another who will roll away the large stone for them, but when they arrive they see that it has been rolled back. Nothing is said as to how this happened.

MARK

Now after the sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.

And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men.

But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. Lo, I have told you."

So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Hail!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."

MATTHEW

And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, brought spices, so that they might go an anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week they went to the tomb when the sun had risen.

And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?" And looking up, they saw that the stone was rolled back; for it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe; and they were amazed. And he said to them, "Do not be amazed; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen, he is not here; see the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you."

And they went out and fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them; and they said nothing to any one, for they were afraid.

LUKE

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices which they had prepared.

And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel; and as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead?

Remember how he told you while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise."

And they remembered his words, and returning from the tomb they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest.

Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told this to the apostles; but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.

JOHN

Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." Peter then came out with the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first; and stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; he saw the linen cloths lying, and the napkin, which had been on his head, not lying with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not know the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples went back to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." Saying this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." Mary Magdalene went and said to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them . . .

(Thomas doubts . . . 8 days later is satisfied . . . After this, a revelation at the Seat of Tiberias . . .)

Matthew, however, adds at this point a highly colorful narrative. He tells us that there was an earthquake, a descending angel who rolled back the stone and then sat upon it, that his appearance was like lightning and his raiment white as snow, and that he frightened the guards into paralysis. It appears from his account that this exciting event happened either when the women arrived, or immediately before, for the angel tells the women not to be afraid, a request which makes sense only if they have witnessed the event itself or his terrifying radiance.

Luke does not follow Matthew in this story, saying only that the women found the stone rolled away. This is interesting if Luke had Matthew before him when he wrote (as many textual scholars think), since it is more common for writers to elaborate upon stories than it is for them to pare them back again to non-sensational character. One wonders why Luke passed by the opportunity to include so dramatic a story.

In John's account the stone has been taken from the tomb. No comment is made about Mary's concern over this, nor about the agency by which it was done.

5. *Testimony as to ENTRY.* In Mark the women enter the tomb. In Matthew it is impossible to know whether they ever enter or not. They went to "see the tomb," Matthew tells us, but they were addressed by the angel and departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy. If they went in, Matthew chooses not to tell us about it. In Luke the women enter. In John, Mary does not enter at first, but finally stoops to look "into the tomb." It is impossible to know certainly whether she stepped inside. (The student should keep in mind constantly that Mary figures in all four stories, yet things are said about her conduct which simply will not permit us to harmonize the four accounts.)

6. *Testimony as to SPEAKERS.* Although the small variants are beginning to add up to significance, we come now for the first time to really obtrusive ones. The four accounts introduce us to these speakers:

In Matthew, *the angel* who descended and moved the stone.

In Mark, *a young man* dressed in a white robe (he is not identified as an angel, we should remember, and white robes were not uncommon in that day).

In Luke, *two men* who "stood by" the women "in dazzling apparel" (they are not identified as angels, although the women are frightened and bow low in typical Oriental homage).

In John, *"two angels in white,"* one sitting at the place where Jesus' head had been, another where his feet had been.

If Mary was involved in all four of these incidents, whom did she see and hear? Did she meet one angel or two? Did she encounter one young man or two men? Is one of the two angels in John's account the angel who rolled back the stone in Matthew? If not, did Mary see three angels? But that story isn't related by John, of course, so we are hardly allowed to frame such a question. The significant point is that it seems impossible to suppose that Mary could have had *all* the experiences told about her by the four writers. We seem to face here, by any rational method I can imagine, an either-or situation.

It is perhaps a good time now to notice something peculiarly interesting about Mark's gospel. It is the freest of the four from the miraculous and the supernatural. It says nothing about miraculous agency in rolling away the stone. It does not identify the young man as an angel. And (as we shall shortly see) it says nothing at all about post-resurrection appearances of Christ. (I am omitting from consideration the interesting "additions" to Mark which are often printed after the eighth verse of Chapter 16. They provide fascinating problems of their own, but these lie beyond the province of this short essay.)

Whatever may be the explanation for Mark's more naturalistic account, we can hardly help reflecting for a moment upon the well-known tendency to include more and more sensational details as a story is circulated. The reader may find it provocative to compare the overall tone of Mark's account with the overall tone of the others, and then ask himself what the difference may suggest.

7. *Testimony as to the MESSAGE.* We notice a striking similarity between Mark and Matthew in their account of what the speaker says. Mark's rather enigmatic "his disciples and Peter" (why this odd separation?) is changed by Matthew. And where as the young man in Mark says "as *he* told you," Matthew's angel says, "Lo, *I* have told you." But this pair of divergencies detract hardly at all from the general likeness of the two accounts.

Luke, of course, has two men to deal with and their message is quite different. (It should be remembered that if we try to harmonize our very first problem about TIME by postulating two visits by Mary, we now are faced with a situation in which Mary hears at least three different messages in Mark, Luke, and John! The problem seems to me to become insoluble when we also find that she is represented as having completely opposite *reactions* to the message in Mark and Matthew.)

If harmonizing these passages means that we must simply squeeze them all together somehow, it appears that things are going to get terribly crowded and hurried. All those differing speakers and messages, plus the fact of completely different reactions, must make the hardiest harmonizer pause. I know from long experience, however, that where there is a will there is a way, an old truism that authors should never forget in their presentation of unpopular views. No matter how carefully one marshals his evidence, he is unlikely to dent the armor of a man who is determined to uphold the theory of verbal inspiration and absolute Biblical infallibility.

An interesting piece of minutiae turns up at this point in our parallel accounts. Notice that Matthew and Mark both mention that Jesus was going before the disciples to Galilee. Luke retains a reference to Galilee, but uses it quite differently. There is no mention of the fact that the disciples will see him there, only that he told them there of his coming death and resurrection.

In John's account, Mary sees Jesus and Jesus gives her a message. It is not, however, the message which the angel and the young man of Matthew and Mark gave. Jesus says "go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." It is odd that

he should not have clarified this comment with some further remark, such as, "I will meet you in Galilee later."

An astonishing and insurmountable obstacle (it seems to me) appears next in the

8. *Testimony as to the WOMEN'S DEPARTURE AND BEHAVIOR.* Mark says that they fled and said "nothing to anyone" because of their fear. Matthew says they ran to tell the disciples (they were interrupted by Jesus, but he appears to have sent them on to tell his "brethren to go to Galilee"). How one can reconcile Mark's "they said nothing to any one" with Matthew's account at this point is beyond my power of comprehension. Luke, of course, makes it even clearer. He says "they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest." But how shall we reconcile Matthew and Luke with what Mark says? All I really hope for is that at this point my most reluctant reader may admit that we *do* have some stubborn textual problems which will not allow us to speak glibly and easily of Biblical inerrancy. Am I wrong to think that we might profit immensely in terms of humility and open-mindedness to others if we could both *see* and *feel* (the latter is so important that the former may be meaningless without it) the presence of these difficulties?

In John, Mary goes to the disciples (as she does not in Mark), but her message is different. "I have seen the Lord," she tells them.

9. *Testimony as to the SEQUEL.* As stated, there is in Mark no account at all of resurrection appearances. In Matthew, Jesus makes one to the women. Although the angel had said to the women in Matthew that they would see him in Galilee, they meet him instead in Judea, right away, and he then passes the word that the *others* will see him in Galilee.

In Luke the women tell what they have seen, but the disciples do not believe. Nothing is said of Christ's appearing to anyone at that time, as nothing is said in Luke of the whole business about his meeting them in Galilee.

In John the Lord appears that very evening (in Judea) among the disciples. Again an interesting problem arises. Matthew had suggested that Jesus said "tell my brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see me." But in John the brethren see him that very night, not in Galilee, but in Judea. How does one account for this discrepancy? A week later Thomas saw Jesus, too, not in Galilee, but in Judea. Of course, in John's account there had been nothing said of Galilee appearances, so John is perfectly consistent with himself. But how do we reconcile John's account with Mark and Matthew?

When one thinks of a kind of dictation theory of inspiration while he puzzled over these varying accounts, he may find it strange that they should so differ as to create such problems. Any power capable of taking over a man's mind and dictating perfectly accurate details could easily have harmonized the accounts so that none of us later need have been puzzled. It remains for me one of the most insoluble of enigmas that men can comprehend all these things and yet hold to the mechanical, dictation theory of composition.

We have noticed how radically different John's account is from the others. The business about Peter and John and their foot race, the weeping outside the tomb and Mary's subsequent dialogue, the initial failure to recognize Jesus and the later chat with him, his strange request that he be not touched since he had not ascended —all these things have no counterpart in the other three.

That request of Christ's that Mary not touch him deserves a passing comment. How are we to reconcile what is said here in John with the remark in Matthew that the women "took hold of his feet" and apparently were not rebuked at all? Or how shall we reconcile his rebuke to Mary with his insisting just a few days later, before his ascension, that Thomas *should* touch him?

When my friend in the *Firm Foundation* says that "when there is a conflict let's change man's findings and not God's revelation," I have some willingness to sympathize with his fears but I have also a question I cannot answer: How do I change my findings? How do I deny my eyes and my reason? And if I wilfully deny them, how can I be sure that I will not soon be led astray by the very blindness and irrationality which I have deliberately cultivated in order to "save" the Bible?

One final comment about whether we can reconcile a few of the discrepancies by assuming *two* visits by Mary. If she did indeed go twice, these questions occur:

How could the Mary of John's gospel, who went and told Simon and John, have been the same Mary who in Mark's gospel "said nothing to anyone?"

How would the Mary who is told in Mark that she will see Jesus in Galilee react when she had *already seen him?* (Or if John's visit by Mary is afterwards—impossible when you recall our TIME problem—then the young man's comment is still fulfilled much sooner than he said it would be.)

There is little point in raising more difficulties about the "double visit" solution. Anyone who cares may raise several more objections to that theory than I have raised here. I think we cannot postulate a double visit without making Mary into a manifest hypocrite at one time or another, and without running into all kinds of problems as we compare the things said to have happened to her.

What then are we left with? It seems to me that the one tremendously significant thing on which all four writers agree is this: *Jesus arose.* They differ in a multitude of details, so that we may find it hard to accept a mechanical theory of inspiration, but they agree on the basic fact which all the details are meant to illustrate.

The cardinal item of faith, then, would be the resurrection. A church in one province, with only Mark's gospel, might be amazed to hear a preacher from a church in another province which had only John's. But surely they would not have disfellowshipped one another because of the new and variant recitals of what happened on that resurrection morning. The salient feature would be that Jesus did indeed arise.

The preceding is submitted, schematized in a more mechanical way than I have ever seen anyone do it, in the

hope that it may provide a wedge for those who would like to diminish the tendency towards bibliolatry in members of the Church of Christ. It is submitted in the hope that it will increase humility in us so far as interpretation problems in general are concerned, and that it will free us to fall in love with and worship a Person instead of expending so many of our energies fiercely defending the infallibility of a book. Once the book assumes its proper proportions, it can be re-approached in exciting ways and yield great dividends without exposing us to some of the great dangers which bibliolatry spawns.—*Riverside Church of Christ,* 867 *Spaulding, Wichita, Kan.*

CONCERNING A NEW TRANSLATION

It was recently my good pleasure to meet and hear Mr. Robert Bratcher of the American Bible Society, the man who translated *Good News for Modern Man,* a book that heads the best-seller list among the paperbacks with a total of more than 12 million copies. Mr. Bratcher is as modest as he is scholarly, and his concern that the public have an easy-to-read Bible is obvious.

The college students to whom Mr. Bratcher spoke were impressed with the case he made for continued revisions of the scriptures, though some were made uncomfortable by his criticisms of the King James Version. To those who insisted that surely the King James Version was satisfactory, Mr. Bratcher pointed out that there were some passages that simply could not be understood as they appeared in that version. He cited Acts 8:33 as an example: "In his humiliation his judgment was taken away." He challenged anyone to make sense of those words apart from help outside the King James Version. He told of one lad who took up the challenge, explaining that when a person is humiliated as Jesus was it would be expected that he would lose all judgment!

Mr. Bratcher's own version is an improvement: "He was humiliated, and justice was denied him."

He explained that *Good News for Modern Man* was intended for those who used English as a *second* language, and thus needed a simple, up-to-date version of the scriptures. He said the American Bible Society was delightfully surprised that the version has been enthusiastically received by those whose native language is English. He purposely avoided such words as justification, expiation, reconciliation. Instead he used "being put right with God" for justification, and in place of "to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Heb. 2:17), he put "so that the people's sins would be forgiven."

Mr. Bratcher explained that the translator has a serious problem in rendering the scriptures into the language of people whose culture is much different from the Greek-Roman world that produced the Bible. Such ideas as "anchor of the soul" has no meaning to inlanders who have no contact with the language of mariners. Nor does "Your sins shall be as white as snow" mean much in those areas of the world where it never snows. For our Lord to be referred to as "the bread of life" means less to those people who do not have bread in their diet than it does to us. And what does the expression "They were sawn into" (Heb. 11:37) mean to people so primitive that an implement like a saw is unknown?

In all such cases it is necessary to appropriate the meaning of scripture to the various cultures. Mr. Bratcher explained that while hope is indeed "an anchor of the soul" to us, it is better in some primitive societies to describe hope as "our picketing peg," in reference to the means by which the people secure their camps.

He pointed to another interesting problem in translation. In a few of the more primitive languages our pronoun "We" may be translated in two ways, a "We" that includes only those who are speaking, or a "We" that is more inclusive, referring to all those present. So how is one to render such verses as Matt. 8:25: "They went and woke him, saying, 'Save, Lord; we are perishing'?" Did the disciples include Jesus when they spoke of perishing or only themselves? It may not be a big point, but it is one more problem that the translator faces.

Mr. Bratcher bothered to share with the students his view of the inspiration of the scriptures. He made it clear that this does not to him imply infallibility, for he sees errors in the scriptures, though no significant ones. To him inspiration means that the writers of scripture were enabled of God to see more than the facts. The inspired man was able to discern the meaning of the facts. Even if their "facts" may have sometime been confused, they nevertheless conveyed the meaning and the truth that God wanted the people to have.

He admitted to difficulty in persuading people to accept new versions of the Bible. But he takes comfort in the fact that the King James Version itself was forty years in being accepted. One church leader in that day was quoted as saying "I'd rather be dragged by horses" than to use the new translation. So suspicion of new translations is nothing new.

Those of you who are pleased with the *Good News for Modern Man* will be pleased to hear that the American Bible Society is now working on a similar production for the Old Testament scriptures, which should be ready in another four or five years.

A final note of interest in Mr. Bratcher's talk was his reference to the woman who drew the many illustrations for *Good News for Modern Man.* She was under no instructions from the Society, save to go through the scriptures and draw such pictures as to her seemed appropriate. So she was in a way an interpreter herself, as of course every translator is. Knowing this, it is interesting to thumb through the new version and study the illustrations, noticing how her drawings are not only interpretations of the text but of the cultural practices as well.

Sometimes she seems inconsistent. In Acts 20, for example, she is illustrating Paul talking to the saints at Troas, and she quite properly has poor Eutychus nodding in a nearby window, ready to fall to his death. But she includes *bareheaded* women in the audience, while at least one man has on a

turban. But in 1 Cor. 10 at the serving of the Supper the men are bareheaded and the women carefully covered. The last scene would, by the way, please our "one cup" brethren!

She doesn't venture to illustrate a baptizing, but she does have Jesus *literally* walking on water. And she makes an interesting distinction between the accounts of Jesus cleansing the temple. In illustrating the account in Mark 11 she has Jesus chasing the money-changers out of the temple, and there is no whip in his hand. In John 2 she draws another picture of the same event, and this time a whip is in Jesus' hand, but he is using it only on the animals.

This indicates that whether one is using words or pictures there are difficulties in interpretation. And it just may be that when you are drawing a picture of it you are a little more on the spot, for pictures are less ambiguous.

Speaking of drawing pictures of biblical events reminds me of a story coming out of Harvard Divinity School. Some of the students were pressing the professor as to what he made of the ressurection narrative. Not quite satisfied with his answer, they asked him: "Suppose someone was there with a Brownie and snapped a picture of the resurrection. When the film was developed, what would he have?" The professor, known to be less "liberal" than most of his Harvard colleagues, mused for a moment, and then said: "I suppose he would have a picture of—*the resurrection!*"

So in the *Good News for Modern Man* we have more than a mere translation. There is someone there with a Brownie!

We do indeed commend the American Bible Society and Robert Bratcher for making the New Testament scriptures as fresh and up-to-date as the morning newspaper. We thank God for their labor of love. And let this random report on Mr. Bratcher's talk be our way of expressing gratitude. —*the Editor*

AN IMPRESSIVE CONCESSION

Sometime back Prof. A. T. DeGroot of Texas Christian University, a respected Disciple historian, made the following judgment of Churches of Christ.

No group in the religious world other than themselves considers them to be a genuine unity movement.

The professor made this evaluation in reference to our claim of being the means of unity for all churches. We have made it clear that our answer to the problem of division is for all others to become like ourselves in respect to doctrine and practice. We may not always be so blunt as to tell others that they must become carbon copies of ourselves in order to be truly Christian, and so we use terms like "New Testament Christianity" and "accepting the truth" to soften the force of our arrogance. Men like A. T. DeGroot are not slow to see that we equate "New Testament Christianity" with our own preferred practices, and that our "accepting the truth" plea is hardly more than a call for a Church of Christ interpretation of the scriptures.

Anyone taking our plea seriously could well come up with ideas about foot washing, the holy kiss, and speaking in tongues, all of which were a part of "New Testament Christianity" and can surely lay claim to being part of "accepting the truth." But such ones would be summarily rejected, and they could not be part of us. When such ones insist on the things we oppose they are heretics. When they oppose the things we insist upon they are hobbyists.

This kind of mentality makes void any appeal for unity to men like DeGroot. Surely we cannot be serious, they ask themselves, in supposing that a divided Christendom will see in us the panacea for its perennial illness. They see our plea for unity as nothing more than a demand for conformity. In their eyes we are more like a sect seeking to strengthen itself rather than a movment seeking to unite all Christians. Indeed, we have long left the impression that there are no Christians besides ourselves, that only we are the true church, and that unity is a simple matter of "obeying the gospel" and "going by the Book." That means of course that all other churches, everything from high church Episcopalians to lowly Pentecostals, will become Churches of Christ such as may be seen by any inquiring person in such places as Nashville and Dallas.

It is no wonder that no one has thus far paid any attention to us. While DeGroot is right in saying that no group thinks of us as a genuine unity movement, it is also true that the Christian world does not think of us at all. What we keep saying we say mostly to ourselves, which is good, for we do less harm that way. We simply have no witness to the world for we have no contact with the world. We have not been a part of "the Great Conversation" that has long taken place among church leaders in the search for oneness. Our witness has taken the form of a monologue within the framework of our own party or parties rather than a dialogue within the larger Christian world.

These things we have said many times in this publication, and along with it we have expressed confidence that we are arousing from our slumber and are at the dawn of a new day. Many are discovering what it means to be free in Christ, and along with it they are discovering a new world. They are joining the human race and are becoming more sensitive to the human predicament. They are loving more and are being more honest. They are indulging in the fine art of self-criticism.

An instance of this has to do with this very statement from A. T. DeGroot. One of our preachers in the Dallas-Fort Worth area recently delivered a provocative message on unity, and to make sure that his message got across he passed out copies of it to all in attendance. It would be well if it could be distributed far and wide, not as some diatribe of a Ketcherside, a Meyers, or a Garrett or some other heretic among us, but as an appeal from the seat of orthodoxy.

He acknowledges that the plea for unity of the Churches of Christ has been "weak and timid, if heard at all." And then he quotes DeGroot's charge against the Churches of Christ: *No*

group in the religious world other than themselves considers them to be a genuine unity movement.

With refreshing candor he says of DeGroot's charge: *It is difficult to deny.*

In humility he concedes to what he would no doubt have once considered fighting words, or as a vicious attack upon *the church.* A Church of Christ minister concedes to a charge by a Christian Church scholar that we are not a genuine unity movement! And this he did before his Sunday morning assembly, and issued copies of it to make sure they understood!

So you see why I am encouraged.

There is more and more of this kind of thing going on. They are signs that we are maturing, and as we mature we will place ourselves in a better position to witness for Christian unity and to become a genuine unity movement. That movement will first find impetus in our own ranks as we make a sincere effort to love and to understand each other in the several factions of Churches of Christ. United ourselves we will be ready for a serious and impressive testimony to the Christian world.

And then the T. C. U. professor will have to take it all back!

—the Editor

God and Culture . . .

GOD SPEAKS THROUGH GREAT LITERATURE

The other day I was discussing Dostoevsky's "Grand Inquisitor", a selection from his *Brothers Karamazov* with a group of college students, and the question came up as to what constitutes *great* literature. I had pointed out that Dostoevsky is perhaps the greatest of all the modern novelists, and that *Brothers Karamazov* was his greatest novel, and that "The Grand Inquisitor" was its greatest chapter. It required little logic for them to conclude that I was saying that the several pages before us were perhaps the greatest piece of literature produced in modern times. The question was therefore appropriate: *What makes great literature?*

I pointed out that for literature to become great, a *classic*, it must transcend the time and place that produced it. To be great Dostoevsky cannot be *Russian* nor a man of the 1800's; he must be *universal* and his message must speak to men of all ages. Great literature is language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree. Insofar as we know, Homer only wrote. He never was a king or a general, nor did he ever found a city. He only wrote—and yet a civilization was built on him. Homer still lives, still speaks, and like the pyramids, he defies time. This is great literature. It nurtures the mind and challenges it to excellence. It incites humanity to continue living by coming to terms with man's most basic problems. Great literature always in some way deals with the human predicament.

We are saying in this essay that God uses the great men of letters in his pursuit of sinful man. They are in a sense inspired. They have somehow tapped the deeper springs of wisdom, and we, by reading them, are

brought closer to God. God is the author of all truth, whether it reaches us by way of Shakespeare or the Buddha. He teaches some of us by way of the stage, others of us by way of the athletic field, and surely he intends to reach all of us through the good literature we read.

In "The Grand Inquisitor" Dostoevsky lays before the reader a choice between two kinds of freedom. One is found in the established church that grants security and salvation for loyalty and obedience; the other is found in Jesus Christ and offers no worldly rewards. In the story the cardinal, who has used the Inquisition to bend men to his will and is thus "The Grand Inquisitor", has an encounter with Jesus, who has returned to earth and is held prisoner by the cardinal for doing acts of mercy in the streets of his city. The cardinal is angry because Jesus is a disturbing influence to his system, and he wants him to go away and never return again. But in some twelve pages of monologue (Jesus never speaks) the cardinal states his case to Jesus, arguing that the freedom provided by the church is far better than the freedom offered by Jesus.

The words Dostoevsky puts into the cardinal's mouth provide keen insights into human nature and show the grave difficulty of being a free man in Christ in the face of organized religion. The cardinal says to Jesus: "Didst Thou forget that man prefers peace, and even death, to freedom of choice in the knowledge of good and evil?" Recognizing that Jesus wanted his followers to reject the rigidity of the ancient law and with "free heart decide for himself what is good and what is evil, having only Thy image as a guide," he went on to say: "But didst Thou not know that he would at last reject even Thy image and Thy truth, if he is weighed down with the fearful burden of free choice."

The cardinal assures Jesus that the freedom the church offers will bring the people happiness, just as dumb driven cattle are contented. The church even permits them to sin, and their leisure hours are "like a child's game" in that nothing significant is required of them. By way of miracle, mystery and authority the cardinal's system holds the people captive. As he says to Jesus: "Who can rule men if not he who holds their conscience and their bread in his hands?"

Dostoevsky realized that the church's control of a man's livelihood was too strong for most men, and for the church to control his conscience as well is too much. So the cardinal's power seemed greater than that of Jesus. He had the money, power, and reputation. He had the authority of a great institution behind him, one that controlled men's eternal destiny as well as their welfare in this world. Jesus had none of this apparently.

The cardinal grants that at one time the people were true disciples of Jesus, and had accepted his freedom. But he says, "We have corrected Thy work, and men rejoiced that they were again led like sheep, and that the terrible gift that had brought them such suffering was, at last, lifted from their hearts." The cardinal admits that the church is serving Satan, that it took the power of Rome and the sword of Caesar and "proclaimed ourselves sole rulers of the earth."

Dostoevsky sees the Inquisitor as a pitiful figure. He both loved and hated

Jesus. Deep in his heart he longed for the freedom that only Jesus can give, but he was wedded to his system and could not turn it loose. It was a struggle between flesh and spirit, and the flesh dominated. He complains at Jesus, who never speaks: "Why hast Thou come to hinder us? And why dost Thou look silently and searchingly at me with Thy mild eyes? Be angry. I don't want Thy love, for I love Thee not."

But he did love Jesus. That was his problem, for he was trapped by his system, and could not accept what he most wanted.

He wanted Jesus to chastise him. Or criticize him. Or something. But Jesus never rebuked him. At last he arose and softly kissed the cardinal's "bloodless, aged lips." The cardinal could not stand it. He shuddered. In this moment even his legalism could not help him. He could handle hate, and being a sectarian he could deal with sectarianism. But love was too much for him. He goes to the door, opens it, and says to Jesus: "Go, and come no more . . . come not at all, never, never, never!" Jesus walks out into the darkness, leaving the cardinal with his system, with its mystery, miracle and authority.

The gentle kiss remained a glow in the cardinal's heart, but he adhered to the security of the freedom he had chosen.

Reading in Bed

We continue to insist that a family ought to read together, not only parents to children, but parents to each other. If a man and wife can always have a book at their bedside in which they do at least a few pages of reading aloud to each other frequently, it will prove to be a great blessing. Nor should a father neglect to read to his children, and share with them the excitement that good books generate. We may never do as much as we would like, or as much as we should, but we should always be doing it.

Certainly this should include the Bible and Bible story books, but other things as well. I have been reading *Tom Sawyer* to my two boys, Benjy and Philip. The boys have not yet even heard of Dostoevsky, and presently it seems unlikely that he could ever in their eyes equal Mark Twain in greatness. And there *is* greatness in the writings of Mark Twain. He makes us laugh and cry about this strange game called life. He slips up on us and thrusts under our noses the truth about the way people are, and even while we are laughing we see ourselves in the mirror he is holding there.

But I may have selected the wrong book for Benjy, for he now has a new hero in Huck Finn. When he learned that Huck did not have to study or go either to school or church, and not even have to take baths, he marvelled that anyone could have it so well.

The boys have about decided, however, that fellows like Huck and Tom, as enviable as they are, would be better off if they had parents something like they have. After all, Huck and Tom got into a peck a trouble, and it just helps sometimes for a boy to have parents around to help him over the hard places.

Ouida and I have been reading a most unusual book, one that causes us to search our souls as to whether we are sufficiently concerned about one of mankind's most serious problems. John Howard Griffin's *Black Like Me* is the story of a white man, a writer, who changed himself into a Negro, and then went into the South to see what kind of life the black man really lives. His physician was able to prescribe a medication that darkened his skin somewhat, which, aided by the sun and a sunlamp and stain, made him look so much like a Negro that he was never suspected of being a white man, not even once in an experiment that stretched over many weeks.

Moreover, the transformation was so real that he began to think of himself as really a Negro. He found himself saying "We" as he talked with black people about their problems, and when he looked at himself in the mirror, he actually began to accept himself as really black, with all that means to a man living in Mississippi. Toward the end of the experiment, which found him in Montgomery, Ala., he switched from one role to the other, in a kind of Dr. Jekyl and Mr. Hyde way, in order to show the absurdity of racial discrimination. As a Negro he could not enter most restaurants, or use restrooms, or even get a drink of water; and he was continually subjected to what is called "the hate stare." Stepping into a Negro restroom and applying cleasing cream, he turned back into a white man, and then walked the same beat to experience the vast difference that a little color can make.

The book grips you. It strips you of any illusion you might have that you understand how the Negro feels. Obviously one *cannot* really know what it is like to be a black man in white America without being one. Knowing this, Mr. Griffin decided to become a Negro. I have talked with some of my Negro friends about what Mr. Griffin did. They point to one big difference between the black Mr. Griffin and the real Negro: *Mr. Griffin knew that he wasn't really black, and that he could escape from his bondage at will. The real Negro has no such escape, for he will always be black and will always suffer for it.*

One of my Negro friends illustrated the point by telling the story of a drunk who approached a rather homely woman and said to her, "You are the ugliest woman I ever saw!" To which the woman replied, "You are the drunkest man I ever saw!" The drunk replied, "Yes, but I'll be sober tomorrow!"

Still Mr. Griffin's experiences as a Negro were authentic. He worked, slept, wept, and laughed with the black folk, and he moved among the whites as a Negro. He hitchhiked across Mississippi as a Negro, catching rides with whites, who on a lonely road at night with a black man, would manifest a baseness that they would not dare reveal among whites. Some told of sleeping with Negro girls, others of wanting to, while almost all showed that they had a grossly unjust concept of the black man's sex life. It was this view that the white man has of the Negro's perverted sex life, along with the idea that the black man is intellectually incapable, that Mr. Griffin came to resent the most.

The reader feels for Mr. Griffin in his efforts to get something to eat, to get to a toilet, to find a decent place to rent a room. Whether he took a bus, walked down the street, applied for a job, passed near the police, or whatever, he had to remember that he was

black, which meant what Mr. Griffin calls "tenth rate citizenship."

To Ouida and me the most touching scene in the book is when he was with a Negro family in their shanty home in Mississippi. The man had offered him a place on the floor since he had no other place to stay, though with his six children it would be crowded. Mr. Griffin had previously bought a bag of Milky Ways, so after cornbread and beans they had slices of the candy, which the kids relished. One child salivated so profusely that the juicy chocolate oozed from the corner of her mouth and ran down her face. The mother removed it with a finger and put it into her own mouth. As the children prepared to go to their bunks they came one by one, all six of them, and put their arms around Mr. Griffin and softly kissed his lips.

While the others slept, Mr. Griffin arose from his cold pallet and walked out into the yard. Sitting on the stump of a tree and thinking about those sweet children, as to what the future holds for them in Mississippi where it is sinful to be black, he burst into bitter weeping.

It was indeed a unique scene. A white man turned Negro, weeping for little children as he sat alone in a black man's back yard in rural Mississippi. There is something distinctly Christian about it.

Mr. Griffin's experiences were in 1959. We can only hope that conditions are now somewhat improved. But the basic problem will never be really solved until the white man is willing to accept the Negro as a *person*, with dignity equal to his own.

Black Like Me really touched Ouida and me. I thought of Mr. Griffin when in a conversation recently with a Negro college student. He said to me, "All my life I have been told that the Negro is all right *if he stays in his place.*" He always wondered what that meant—*in his place.* He added: "Regardless of how undesirable a white man is, whether a drunkard or a thief, I have not once heard it said of a white man that "He is all right if he stays in his place."

God *is* speaking to us in our culture. That is, if we really want to listen.

—the Editor

FELLOWSHIP FORUM

A public dialogue on the subject of fellowship and related issues, featuring speakers from several segments of the restoration movement, will be conducted by the church of Christ, 14 East Maple Street, Hartford, Illinois, during the Christmas holidays. Afternoon and evening sessions will be held on December 26, with three sessions on December 27. The noon meal will be served by the ladies of the congregation on December 27, and the evening meal on both days. Speakers and subjects are as follows:

"What is the Religious Authority for Believers in Christ?", Charles Holt, Editor of Sentinel of Truth, Chattanooga, Tenn.; "Is The Restoration Principle Valid for Our Day?", Philip Young, Professor of Church History, Saint Louis Christian College, St. Louis, Mo.; "Why Are We Divided?", La Vern Houtz, President, Southeastern Christian College, Winchester, Kentucky; "What Is Opinion as Distinguished from Faith?", Clint Evans, Assistant Principal of Alton High School, Alton, Ill.; "On What Grounds May One be Excluded from Congregational Association?", Harold Key, Minister, Central Church of Christ, Saint Louis, Missouri; "What Constitutes Heresy?", Leroy Garrett, Professor of Philosophy, Bishop College, Dallas, Texas; "Who is My Brother in Christ?", Russell Boatman, Dean, St. Louis Christian College, St. Louis, Mo.; "What Is the Proper Application of Romans 14 Today?", Darrell Bolin, Evangelist, Lock Haven, Pennsylvania.

W. Carl Ketcherside and Hershel Ottwell will preside at the sessions and ample time will be afforded for questioning of the speakers by the audience. Information may be secured by writing to Berdell McCann, 118 East Second Street, Hartford, Illinois 62048.

BOOK NOTES

Encounter Between Christianity and Science is an important volume for this technological age, for it is a testimony of men of science to their Christian faith. Geologists, psychologists, chemists, biologists, sociologists, and physicists show how they can be committed to the world as well as to the Christian community. They are all Ph.D.'s with important positions at leading institutions, and yet they believe in the Bible as the inspired word of God and in the deity of Christ.

This is a reasonable and responsible piece of work. Those troubled with the claims of evolution should read this volume. It is ideal for the college student who supposes that if one is highly educated he can have no real confidence in the Biblical account. 5.95

The Religion of Ancient Israel by Th. C. Vriezen seems prohibitive at 7.50, but it is over 300 pages and in hardback, and weighty in content. The eminent Dutch scholar presents a portrait of a people's religion: its institutions, its symbols and places of worship, its prophets, its forms of life. He shows how primitive Hebrew tribes became united in the one great religion of Israel. The fact that this volume has appeared in several languages give testimony to the value it will be to you who are interested in more serious study.

What's New in Religion? by Kenneth Hamilton is a book that fills you in on what has been going on in the world of religious thought. It is more than this, for it is a critical study of the New Theology, the New Morality, and Secular Christianity. You'll enjoy his chapter on "Liberal and Conservative" and may be more careful about how you use the terms. His chapter on "The Secular Made Sacred" is also provocative. His exploration of "Worldly Christianity" may challenge your idea of what religion is. Only 3.95 in hardback.

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